

commission or commissions from preparing additional separate specifications and ~~awarding additional separate contracts~~ for any other category of work when it is deemed in the best interest of such officer, board, department, ~~commission or commissions to do so, work.~~

(b) Building projects over five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000); separate prime contracts. -- All contracts hereafter awarded by the State or by a county or municipality, or a department, board, commissioner, or officer thereof, for the erection, construction, alteration or repair of buildings, or any parts thereof, Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, when the entire cost of the erection, construction, alteration, or repair of a building exceeds five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000), the State, county, municipality, or other public body shall accept bids for each subdivision or branch of work for which specifications are required to be prepared under subsection (a) of this section and shall award the respective work specified separately to responsible and reliable persons, firms or corporations regularly engaged in their respective lines of work. When the estimated cost of work to be performed in any single subdivision or branch for which separate bids are required by this subsection is less than ~~ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000),~~ the same may be included in the contract for one of the other subdivisions or branches of the work, irrespective of total project cost.

Bids may also be accepted from and awards made to separate contractors for other categories of work.

Each separate contractor shall be directly liable to the State of North Carolina, or to the county or municipality, and to the other separate contractors for the full performance of all duties and obligations due respectively under the terms of the separate contracts and in accordance with the plans and specifications, which shall specifically set forth the duties and obligations of each separate contractor. For the purpose of this section, the wording 'separate contractor' is hereby deemed and held to mean means any person, firm or corporation who shall enter into a contract with the State, or with any ~~county or municipality,~~ county, municipality, or other public body, for the erection, construction, alteration or repair of any building or buildings, or parts thereof.

All public authorities coming within the requirements of this section shall have the authority to purchase and erect prefabricated or relocatable buildings or portions thereof without complying with the provisions hereof, except that portion of the work which must be performed at the construction site.

(c) Building projects five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or less. -- When the entire cost of the erection, construction, alteration, or repair of a building is five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or less, the State, county, municipality, or other public body may accept bids under the single-prime contract system, the separate prime contract system, or both. The provisions of subsection (b) of this section apply to the use of the separate prime contract system under this subsection. The provisions of subsection (d) of this section apply to the use of the single-prime contract system under this section, except that bidding in the alternative between the single-prime and separate prime systems is not required. Contracts bid in the alternative